



## **COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**

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To: City Council

From: Brian Pine, CEDO Director

Date: March 16, 2022

Subject: Designation of 51 Elmwood Avenue as a Sanctioned Site for Temporary Emergency Shelter

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### **Background**

The numbers of people experiencing houselessness and housing insecurity continues to be almost triple that of the pre-pandemic and access to emergency housing is restricted from the levels available during the Winter of 2021. On February 7<sup>th</sup> the City Council approved the release of \$2.975M in ARPA funds for the specific purpose of addressing and ameliorating houselessness in the City of Burlington, including \$1.47 million for the procurement of shelters and the creation of a supportive emergency shelter community and \$970,000 for the procurement and operation of a year-round Community Resource Center.

The shelter module approach has proven effective in acting as a bridge to permanent housing in cities across the United States and is a rapid and cost-effective tool for sheltering the most vulnerable in the near future. In addition to the 30 individual shelters, the site will also include a mobile modular structure that will house six (6) toilet/sink/shower compartments connected to public water and sanitary sewer services at the site. The site will have suitable lighting and electricity will be provided to each of the 30 shelters. WIFI will be available throughout the site. There will be space provided for trash receptacles, bike storage, and picnic tables. The city will also procure a mobile modular structure to serve as the Community Resource Center (CRC) on this site. The CRC will include additional bathrooms, a kitchen, offices, and open community space to serve both the shelter community and others that need low-barrier access to daytime shelter, food, coffee, and hygiene products as well as the opportunity to connect with housing resources, health resources, including recovery and mental health, and other social services. Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity is the operating partner of the CRC. The project will always meet relevant building and safety codes. It will be required to receive a zoning permit and approval by City building inspectors. The emergency shelter will be managed by an operating partner in accordance with statewide Emergency Shelter standards.

### **Location**

CEDO worked across City departments to identify 10 potential sites based on ownership and proximity to transportation, services, and amenities. The sites identified were:

- BHS Campus
- 305 Flynn Ave
- 195 Flynn Ave
- 51 Elmwood Ave
- 220 Main Street
- 901 North Ave
- 70 Pearl Street

345 Pine Street  
585 Pine Street  
68 Sears Lane

Sites were then scored by a group including the City's Community Resource Center Project Manager and representative to the Continuum of Care and representatives from the Office of Planning, Department of Permitting and Inspections, Department of Public Works, Burlington Electric Department, Department of Parks Recreation & Waterfront, and the Mayor's Office. Based on this scoring, the Elmwood Avenue Parking lot has been identified as the location that will best meet the needs of the project because of its proximity to transportation, services and amenities and its ease of connection to municipal power, water and sewer. The CRC and shelter community are being co-located for efficiency of service provision and access. Many other services that the community experiencing homelessness need to access are also located in our downtown. Burlington's transport hub is downtown. This is a central site, city owned, accessible, and close to services. The City is proposing to use the parking lot for up to 36 months to serve as a location for this emergency shelter.

### **Public Engagement & Coordination**

- Direct communication with adjacent property owners, parking lease holders, Old North End and Central District City Councilors (March)
- Meetings with Burlington Business Association Staff and Chair of Church Street Market Place Commission
- Downtown Business Owners 3/15
- DPW Commission 3/16
- CDNR Committee 3/17
- City Council 3/21
- Wards 2/3 NPA 4/14
- Chittenden County Homeless Alliance, homelessness service and housing, providers, homeless community outreach providers and people with lived experience

### **Additional Planned/Ongoing Communication:**

- Outreach and meetings with adjacent residents
- Community Meetings
- ONE Community Center
- Sustainability Academy (Burlington School District)
- Ongoing with shelter/housing/service providers, outreach teams, and members of the community with lived experience.

CEDO is working as rapidly as possible, in coordination with other City Departments and community partners, to implement the Mayor's Action Plan to End Homelessness in response to the urgent needs of those experiencing homelessness. The public has spoken that ending homelessness in Burlington is a top priority and CEDO is acting expeditiously on this broadly held goal. In the coming days, CEDO will update its website to include more details on the plan and address frequently asked questions.

Please feel free to contact me directly or share my contact information with anyone who wishes to share their concerns or learn more about this important initiative: [bpine@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:bpine@burlingtonvt.gov); 802-578-6953.